(c) by when the proposal is likely to be implemented;

(d) whether Government have also approved any proposal for providing more gas to Maharashtra and for setting up of second gas terminal at Usar; and

(e) if so, what are the details of the proposals and on which date Government's decision was taken and conveyed to the Government of Maharashtra in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH SHARMA): (a) to (c) The concept of laying a gas pipeline from the Western offshore to the Southern region has been approved in principle. The proposal envisages the use of surplus gas from the Western offshore. This is also proposed to be supplemented by import of natural gas from the Middle East subject to its techno-economic feasibility.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

Cooking Gas to Rural Areas

2917. SHRI BHUPINDER SINGH MANN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that rural population has been denied its right to use cooking gas on flimsy technical reasons; and

(b) whether Government propose to stop this discrimination against them and make necessary arrangements to enable them to avail their right as a citizen of this country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPTAIN SATISH SHARMA): (a) and (b) New LPG distributerships are opened by Public Sector LPG Marketing Companies, subject to viability, in a phased manner at places with a population of 20,000 and above and not on rural/urban basis. However, the Government have allowed parallel marketing and sale of LPG by private agencies at market determined prices in any market of their choice, including rural areas.

Exodus of specialized staff of oil companies from public sector to private sector

2918. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the public sector oil companies have been facing large scale exodus of specialised staff to private refineries;

(b) if so, what is the number of the specialised staff which have left the public sector oil companies (with name) during 1992 and since the beginning of 1993 (till-date);

(c) what are the major causes identified for the exodus of the specialised staff from the oil companies; and

(d) what measures have been taken by Government to check the trend?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH SHARMA): (a) There is no such exodus.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Plans of Gail for setting up LPG plants

2919. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Gas Authority of India Limited has chalked out an ambitious plan to set up LPG plants at several places in the country;

(b) if so, the details of the LPG plants likely to be set up in the country during the Eighth Five Year Plan period; and